A Serial of Instruction Inviting Grave Research, No. 13.

Within four verses of the New Testament, as if to warn a deeply rooted human passion to curb its natural tendency, the Revelator John uses this terse language: "If any man add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." It does not necessarily refer to adding verses or chapters, but *anything. Any* addition whatever. To add a condition is manifestly as culpable as to add a verse, chapter, or book, and as certain to invite upon the author "the plagues written" in the book.

A church accepting the Gospel as its only lawgiver, guide, rule of faith and practice, and exponent of doctrine, and which emphasizes its sincerity by disavowing allegience to any and all man-made rules and doctrines, and by further accepting and fellowshipping all Gospel practices, will never be suspicioned of adulterating the Christian creed. To add one single condition and make it binding, compromises all.

Christ commanded baptism, and your church has agreed upon the mode and design and all prerequisites to that sacred sacrament. And yet in 1883 you positively made it your undeviating "rule," that said sacrament, performed precisely according to your conception of Gospel authority, by a pious and regularly ordained minister of the Gospel, and one too, who holds the same conception of rites, ceremonies, and doctrines as you do, and who was baptized by you, is invalid unless he actually holds his membership in your organization.

You added the condition that baptism is not baptism unless the administrator belongs to the German Baptist organization, even though said administrator be as thoroughly German Baptist as yourselves, so far as you pretend to follow the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. In other words you make the administrator a positive factor in the work of regeneration, and regulate that factor yourselves. You add that factor to the Gospel.

Carrying your theory further, should eight persons in the vicinity of Swartzenau, Germany, (or anywhere else) "covenant together to obey Christ in all things," and to submit baptism in the river Aeder, precisely as did Alexander Mack and others in 1708, and in doing so deviate not so much as a tithe from anything in faith and form from the founders of the church you profess to represent, you could not fellowship them, nor could you, according to your self made mandate, consider them Christians until rebaptized by one of your ministers. *They* may have complied with the Gospel, and certainly did as fully as did Alexander Mack, and as fully as possible, but did not, and could not comply with the conditions of church membership established in 1883, hence must be rebaptized. In short it makes a German Baptist minister an *essential factor* in the work of regeneration and salvation. Regardless of place and purity of motive, and without regard to correctness of faith, form, and design, *no* baptism is legal unless administered by one of your preachers. That is *your* condition, added to the Gospel by yourselves, and made the "rule" of *the* church.

1st. It rebukes and repudiates the legality of baptism of your church fathers: it illegalizes the fountain from which you believe yourselves to be the only flowing stream.

2nd. It proclaims the astounding doctrine that God, a willing and repentant people, and the New Testament, altogether, are absolutely inert without church organizing or soul-saving possibilities. There must be your *added* condition, viz., a German Baptist minister.

This may strike you as impudent, but it is eminently and fairly the logic of your own voluntary creation. You doubtless allowed your malice to smite your own heads, but that the above is the logical rendering of your self-adopted platform goes without questioning.

"As ye judge ye shall be judged," remember, and the "measure" applied to the baptism of Alexander Mack by the Annual Meeting of 1883 "metes" out to yourselves an illegal baptism by the confession of your own mouth. Your added condition withers and blasts your own baptism, and no system of logic can turn it aside. Like the fabled reptile that when thoroughly enraged struck its poisonous fangs into its own body and perished.

Were you to profanely undertake the work of deliberately adding to God's word, notwithstanding the divine provision against it, how would you, or how could you proceed differently. The New Testament as a printed volume is a work of art, and adding to or taking from it does not imply the necessity of adding chapters and verses or taking chapters and verses from it, but adding conditions, and printing and writing them in some other book and *making them binding upon the membership*, is what incurs the penalty of Rev. 22 : 18.

Such decisions as the one referring to "female hats" are both *additions* and *subtractions*. They add a condition of membership, making it impossible without submitting to a rule of Annual Meeting to become a member of the church, and take from thousands the privilege of uniting with the church who are willing to obey Christ but can not recognize traditions as a part and parcel of of Christian economy.

It adds a repulsive condition takes away the glorious privilege of uniting with the church on the provisions and restrictions of the Gospel alone.

If you have not added essentially to the Gospel you cannot, nor can any one do so. Many of your burdensome minutes are additions and amenable to Rev. 22 : 18.

Rebaptism, as you preach it, though clearly the offspring of malice and revenge, annihilates your own foundation and repudiates the validity of your birthright. Perhaps, had you known how few you would have to rebaptize, and had had a previous knowledge of the mental character of those submitting to it, you would not have excommunicated the founders of your church, and abrogated your own legitimacy for the sake of striking an enemy with a feather.

But by your own act you have declared yourselves without legitimate baptismal parentage and must suffer the consequences of your own awkwardness. You have voluntarily assumed that any people on the face of the globe, obeying the whole Gospel and complying with every condition of salvation, so far as can be drawn from the conditions of the New Testament, are still not Christians; for thousands of such organizations could exist independent of and unknown to you, and could also have organized very similarly, and quite as legally as the church did at Swartzenau in 1708.

It would seem reasonable that if there ever was a time since Christ that a church could legally exist with nothing for its guide but the Gospel alone, that there always could exist such a church on a similar basis; but your doctrine destroys the idea in the face of overwhelming proof that such has been the case.

Your own church fathers were as utter strangers to all your existing minutes, rules, mandates, customs, and usages, as they were to the statutes of Ohio, and yet upon the correctness of their creed you stand or fall; and the manifest repudiation of their original church government by your modern councils squints sagely of your fall.

[*Concluded Next Week*]

The Leedy Brethren and Their Promises.

The following report of the Council Meeting held between the Leedy Brethren and representatives of the Brethren church, written by Bro. Bashor, is published by request:

OWL CREEK CHURCH.

From the Progressive Christian of Oct. 11th, 1882.

On Tuesday morning 3rd inst we received a call to visit the Owl Creek church to assist in some church business. Brother J. H. Worst had been conducting some meetings at their new church in North Liberty. The meetings were largely attended and a deep religious feeling had been awakened. We met on Tuesday evening for services, and found the large church (which is 34x60 feet) filled with attentive hearers. On Wednesday at ten o'clock met in council with the brethren, and what is known as the Leedy Brethren, to consider our differences, and labor to effect a a union of the two bodies. On opening the meeting for the business of the day, it was found that the Leedy brethren differ from the brethren in three points.

1. They omit the use of the Lord's prayer, holding that its use in all our meetings is not essential to Christian worship; that its use is not binding, neither is it objectionable.

2. That the Lord's supper should be composed in part of "Lamb's Flesh," to the prohibition of all other meats.

3. That no questions should be asked of believers while kneeling in the baptismal waters. All questions should be asked before.

Of the first differences; the Leedy brethren consented to a more extended use of the Lord's prayer in worship. They had used it occasionally, and when worshiping with us would adopt its more general repetition. The brethren, too, think its use twice in every service not essential. They recommend its repetition once at each service, however.

Of the second difference, the brethren do not make the use of lamb's flesh at the Lord's supper, a condition. They teach that the holding of the supper is more essential than the material of which it is composed. They have no objections to the use of lamb's flesh at the Lord's Supper, and could allow the Leedy brethren the privilege of choice. They, on the other hand, are willing when they visit other congregations, and other food than lamb's flesh is used, to forego their preferences, and allow our practice.

The last difference was considered that the only essential element involved in the question, was that the faith of the believer be examined into. It could be done either in or out of the water.

It was further discovered that the Leedy brethren were not disowned from the church, 24 years ago, for immoral conduct, but because of their adherence to the single mode of feet-washing.

The decision arrived at by the council was: that the brethren and the Leedy brethren who felt to do so, should treat each other as brethren in one faith, but no formal union of organizations be effected until a general conference be called, and a fuller expression be obtained from the brethren. This action of fellowshipping each other was made subject to the ratification of a general conference. As the brethren at Owl Creek only compose a part of our general organization, they could not speak for the whole. The meeting was very harmonious, and the feeling displayed very commendable.

In the evening we preached to an immense audience on the issues of the church, and explained the difference between the church and the annual meeting faction of it. Our remarks were listened to with unusual good attention. There are between forty and sixty brethren in this church, who will not apostatize with Annual Meeting. Most of them gave their names as true to the Gospel alone platforms of the church. Friday we bade the brethren farewell and returned home. Brother Worst continued the meeting until Saturday night then went to Danville where he is now laboring.

BASHOR.

The Church's Foundation.

There is an immense doctrinal value in this statement, that the Church is built upon the rock Christ, and that against it, that is, the Church, the gates of hell will not prevail. Any one who thoughtfully looks upon the present aspects of religious controversy sees everywhere one symptom—men are rushing from the plain and simple verities of Christ's faith into the mists of Skepticism or into the ceremonies of Romanism.

The only resting place for the mind and the hope of man is the full recognition of this truth—on this rock, even on Christ the Son of the living God, is the Church built; take that away and all is gone; take away the Godhead of Him who became man for our sakes and you have taken away all that is vital to Christianity; but believe on Him, love Him and you have then found him who is the "Author and Finisher" of faith, Him who in life will sustain, in death will guide, and throughout eternity will be your everlasting song; and even now you may sing:

"No need of prophets to inquire,
The sun is come, the stars retire;
Our Comforter is come, and sheds
His holy influence on our heads."

—REV. W. G. BARRET.